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ABSTRACT

The difference between developed and less developed countries chiefly resides in the effectiveness of their administrative systems. This study attempts to identify and analyze the organizational constraints acting upon and within the Egyptian Ministry of Education that deter its capacity for administrative reform. Critical management processes are examined, such as policy formation, promotion procedures, planning, resource distribution, and local level decision-making. Field visits to several regional school systems and interviews with most of the senior ministry officials were carried out by a team of Egyptian and American researchers. The research is significant for providing close examination of a system closed to most Western researchers. Although the Egyptian educational system is highly bureaucratic, it operates with an acceptable level of efficiency. The great challenge for change should come principally through a strategic planning process examining the present and future needs of the nation and establishing new, realistic directions. There is ideally such a strategic and policy formation body in Egypt. However, a ministry of education sheltered from external pressures for change, with its ranks filled by a seniority system and senior leaders close to retirement, operating thorough routinized procedures, and drastically underfinanced, has little incentive or means to effect significant reform. Included are 66 endnotes. (Author/MLH)

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ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM AND THE EGYPTIAN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM AND THE EGYPTIAN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The difference between developed and less developed countries to a great extend resides in the effectiveness of their administrative systems. The objective of this study is to identify and analyze the organizational constraints acting upon and within the Egyptian Ministry of Education that deter its capacity for administrative reform. Critical management processes are examined, such as, policy formation, promotion procedures, planning, resource distribution, and local level decision making. Field visits to several regional school systems as well as interviews with most of the senior ministry officials were carried out by a team of American and Egyptian researchers. The research is significant because it provides a close examination of a system closed to most Western researchers. The administrative structure of the Ministry will be of interest to scholars because even though it is highly bureaucratic, it operates with relative efficiency. However, what it can not do with any degree of effectiveness is change the educational system from its long established patterns.

Administrative Reform and The Egyptian Ministry of Education

An Egyptian scholar, Mohammed A. El Ghannam, writes that the difference between developed and underdeveloped societies resides in the effectiveness of their administrative systems. He argues that developing countries, including Arab countries, are faced with "a heavy heritage of administrative backwardness" in spite of all efforts made by those nations to set up modern administrations.[1]

The need for modern administration capable of resolving complex problems is clear in the light of the development needs now facing Egypt. With a 1985 population of 49 million and an estimated year 2,000 population of 67 million, Egypt is growing at a rate of 100,000 per month.[2] Because its uninhabitable land is 25 times greater than the habitable, Egypt's entire population is densely concentrated in an area about the size of Switzerland. Over half the urban population live in two cities, with over 12 million in the Cairo metropolitan area.

Egypt's per capita income is $610 dollars, with an income distribution of the lowest 20 percent of the population receiving 5.8 percent of the household income, and the highest 10 percent receiving 33.2 percent. The average gross domestic product has declined from 6.7 percent (1965-1980) to 5.2 percent (1980-1985), the balance of payments is a negative 1.9 billion dollars, external debt 17.7 billion with 7.8 percent of the GNP expended for debt service which drains almost 40 percent of export earnings.[3] The economic picture is further darkened by the burden of trying to recover from three major wars with Israel fought

since the 1952 revolution.

Egypt's problems are compounded because revenue from oil has been cut nearly in half by the glut and fall in prices, tourism revenues in 1985 alone were reduced by 50 percent because of Middle East terrorism, and its agricultural needs have gone from self sufficiency 20 years ago to the current 60 percent importation. Food and petroleum subsidies in 1983/84 cost the government approximately 18 percent of its budgeted expenditures, an amount which almost doubles that spent on public education.[4] The educational situation in many ways mirrors the economic picture. For example, the adult literacy rate in 1980 was estimated at 44 percent, the lowest of 10 comparable lower-middle income countries.[5] Also, the student ratio of success to intake (examination success divided by initial intake) of a six year primary school student cohort (1973-74 to 1980-81) was 56.6 percent of that class, and 27.3 percent were total drop outs.[6]

Qualitative improvements in the teaching-learning aspects of the classroom rarely, if ever, are introduced by a bureaucratic, inefficient and ineffective administrative system. "Throughout history, development or change in education always implied the transition of administration from a 'traditional' to a 'newer' pattern."[7] As Delwin Roy puts it, "rhetoric alone has achieved little...."[8]

Administrative reform is defined as, "planned or at least premeditated, systematic change in administrative structures or processes aimed at effecting a general improvement in administrative output or related characteristics."[9] Successfully initiating reform, educational or otherwise, requires breaking a

complex web of political, social, cultural and economic forces that have converged through history to shape national institutions. Such change does not come easily, as frustrated national leaders throughout the developing world have discovered.

Difficult or not, the Egyptian government continues to stress the need for educational improvement because, as the 1982/83 -1986-87 five year plan points out, "Development can hardly be achieved without well educated, well trained, and properly organized human resources."[10]

Thus, the train of logic developed here is that administrative reform in the Ministry of Education (MOE) is essential to strengthening qualitatively the academic processes of the classroom which in turn result in meeting more effectively the human resource requirements of national development. Considering the economic and educational difficulties facing Egypt, it is understandable that the importance of administrative reform has been a generally accepted idea for years. As this research will report, however, bringing it about is another matter.

Research Framework

What are the specific processes central to strengthening the administrative system of a large complex organization? Drawing from Amitai Etzioni,[11] Richard Scott,[12] and the author's work[13] in the Ministries of Education in six Third World nations, an organization must improve its administrative capability in at least four areas. (1) The staffing system for institutional leadership must select and promote the "best and brightest" into senior leadership positions. (2) The management infrastructure

must be able to plan, communicate, coordinate and distribute resources effectively and efficiently. (3) Planning and policies must realistically establish directions and methods for developmental change. (4) Financial resources must be provided in sufficient quantity to fund adequately the requirements of educational and administrative development. The national government must assign a high enough budget priority to enable the educational system to (a) construct schools consistent with social demand, (b) maintain an attractive salary scale, (c) provide essential instructional materials, and (d) provide a sufficient margin of funding to finance a critical core of innovative program initiatives (administrative and instructional) that can help redirect the system.

The objective of this study is to respond to the general question, what are the organizational constraints acting within and upon the Ministry of Education that deter its capacity for administrative reform? Specifically, how effective are the processes of staffing, infrastructure formation, policy making and planning, and system funding in supporting the requirements of administrative development?

The research data were gathered as part of a wider study conducted in 1986 and 1987 by a combined American and Egyptian team of researchers.[14] Two or more interviews were conducted with all senior MOE administrators, with the exception of the minister of education. Interviews were conducted at the Ministries of Finance and Planning, the Central Agency for Organization and Development, as well as with numerous educational officials, headmasters and teachers in several of the

governorates.[15]

In order to understand contemporary educational management practice, it is helpful to review briefly the type of educational system existing at the time of national independence and the perceived need to modernize through the introduction of science and technology.

Independence and Education

On July 23, 1952 the Egyptian military seized control of the government, ousted king Farouk and dissolved parliament. A new page in Egyptian history was turned.

The new Egyptian government inherited an educational system that was cumbersome, disunited, and prejudicial to the needs of the masses.[16] Part of the reason it was cumbersome, disunited and prejudicial can be attributed to the powerful Ottoman pasha Mohammad Ali who ruled Egypt from 1805 until his death in 1849. He had helped rid Egypt of the French presence (1798-1801), but was greatly impressed by this introduction to Western technologies, styles of life, mechanisms of administration and intellectual outlooks. In order to support his industrial, technical and military needs, he initiated a dual system of education; one for children of the masses who went to traditional Islamic schools, and the other for the elite civil servants and technicians who studied a broader range of subjects, generally of Western origin.

The British "protectorate" from 1882 to 1922 continued the systematic practice of social, economic and educational stratification of the society as well as continued the dual educational system. Education for the masses was either

nonexistent or limited to low level field or workshop activities sufficient to provide subsistence.[17] Radwan calls this "education for serfdom."[18] From 1882 to 1907 the population grew from seven to eleven million, but very few new schools were founded.[19] A consequence of the elitist system of education can be seen in the fact that when the British ended the protectorate in 1922, over 95 percent of the Egyptian population was illiterate.[20]

Challenges to strengthen and redirect the Egyptian educational system have constantly been present since the 1952 revolution. Nasser's "Arab Socialism," Sadat's "Open Door," and Mubarac's "Grand Revival" established new national social and economic development goals requiring commensurate new shifts in direction for the educational system.

However, the educational policies of the three national leaders maintained two important points in common. First, technological skills would be introduced into society through the educational system; and second, education would no longer be elitist and reserved for the few. The educational system would encompass the entire population of primary school age children.

In addition to having to cope with the frequent shift in the emphasis of national development policy, the Ministry of Education must also cope with the need for science, 98 percent of which is generated in industrialized, non-Islamic nations.[21] Any societal resistance that may exist points not at the technology but at the Western cultural package the technology comes in.

If a problem between Islam and science does exist, it has more to do with the methods through which the Koran has been

taught rather than incompatible values. The traditional teaching-learning methods associated with leaning the Koran are memorization and recitation. These instructional modes have been reproduced in the schools. Trying to introduce modern scientific material into a traditional educational system which has never stressed experimentation, problem-solving analysis, or leaning-by-doing is an extraordinarily difficult task.[22] As will be noted later, the modernization of administrative practice is also a difficult task for administrators who have spent all their student years as well as their entire professional lives in an educational system emphasizing a routinized instructional format.

The Egyptian government has recognized the real or imagined tensions between Islam and Western generated science and has attempted to develop educational goals facilitating both. The current Egyptian Law on Education clearly attempts to embrace religion and science when it states, "Pre-university education aims at developing the learner culturally, scientifically and nationally at successive levels...with the aim of developing the Egyptian individual who is faithful to his God, his homeland and to the values of good, truth, and humanity...."[23]

In beginning the discussion of constraints to reform stemming from inside the educational system, the place to begin is with a brief outline of the organization and management structure.

Formal Organization and Management Structure

The system of public education in Egypt maintains four main structural levels. The first is the Ministry of Education headquarters in Cairo headed by the minister. The minister is the only political appointment in the entire system and typically

spends his time and effort dealing with matters external to the MOE (e.g., relations with the legislature and other government units). The first undersecretary tends to run the day to day affairs of the MOE with the endorsement of decisions by the minister.

There are nine functional areas in the MOE, three each in the areas of administrative support (finance, administrative development, statistics), education (technical, general, basic), and service (extracurricular, instructional materials, general). The MOE is charged with establishing plans, programs, procedures, and administrative support systems for carrying out national education policies established by the Higher Council for Pre-University Education, which is the highest educational policy making body in the country.[24]

The second main structural level is found in each of the 26 regional governorates. Since the 1970s an incremental approach to decentralized decision making has been taking place. Currently, the MOE is supposed to make policy in Cairo to be executed and controlled at the governorate level.[25]

The educational system of each governorate is headed by an undersecretary or director general and the systems are structured in a design generally paralleling the functional departments of the MOE. Most of the regional planning, teacher appointments, evaluation and training take place at this level. The third level is a district supervisor headed by a district director general.

Finally, the fourth level is the director of the individual school, called a headmaster. The headmaster has minimal decision-making authority and functions basically as a teacher

coordinator and identifier of problems that are sent up the hierarchy for others to solve.[26]

The next section will deal with identifying organizational constraints to improving administrative processes in the four key areas identified earlier as essential to developing the administrative system and improving the delivery of services.

Staffing for Institutional Leadership

Andr Benoit argues that a ministry needs to be managed through a "balance of power" between political and technical leadership. Without technical leadership a ministry tends to have a lack of interest in "real" educational problems and rewards incompetent people through political appointments. Without political leadership the professional educators have no mandate or specified directions for change and tend to become isolated from the needs of society. Under these conditions the technicians become bureaucrats and concentrate their energies on protecting and enhancing their positions and benefits within the organization.[27]

In Egypt the only non-professional educator in the MOE is the Minister who is selected by and serves at the pleasure of the Prime Minister. For everyone else, the staffing system is based on a 1982 Civil Service Decree which treats the occupational structure (e.g., pay, rank) in all ministries of government exactly the same. Thus, professional educators dominate the leadership structure of the Ministry of Education.

Selection and Promotion. With the exception of the Minister, all administrative personnel, from first undersecretaries on down, begin their careers in the classroom and work their way up

through every level. Administrators take great pride in this fact and argue that such experience is an essential ingredient for a strong administrative system.

Even specialist positions in finance, insurance, statistics, computer methods, information management, and industrial technology are reserved for professional educators. No provision is made for "outside" experts (e.g., economists, planners, statisticians, agricultural engineers) to be employed other than on a temporary basis in the MOE or in the governorates. Some educators pursue Masters or Ph.D. degrees through scholarships in Egypt or foreign countries. The MOE is rarely able to retain them, however, because when they return they must go back to the same positions they held in the seniority system before leaving. Also, the monthly salary increment for a Masters degree is only about US $6.00 and a Ph.D. is US $9.00.

Rules stipulate the minimum number of years one must serve at a specific level before being eligible for promotion. For example, four years of service as vice-principal at the preparatory school level is required before being eligible to be a headmaster. Two years as senior teacher is required before being eligible to be a vice-principal. A minimum of approximately 25 years in the system is necessary to reach the upper levels in the MOE, but 30 to 40 years is more likely. Senior managers usually receive their appointments in their late 50s or early 60s and serve a short period of time before retiring, typically six months to three or four years. The irony of this promotion practice is that when the managers finally reach the top and have the power to make changes, they are

usually preparing for retirement and are not all that willing to take the risks that a program of reform requires.

Regarding promotions, personnel regulations stress that merit is the essential criteria for advancement. In reality, however, merit-based promotions that override the seniority system frequently result in internal conflict, complaints to the Minister or central government officials, or even court action. Ministry officials report that the court typically upholds the sanctity of seniority and mandates the promotion of the grievant. The promotion of more than a few dead people are on the record, having passed away during the wait for court action.

Maintaining tranquility in the system is viewed as so important that the traditional practice of promotion by seniority is rarely violated. In those instances where the chief educational officer in a governorate makes a strong request for a specific candidate's appointment to a particular vacancy even though he is not the most senior person, the Minister sometimes agrees. However, the appointment is made as "acting" until positions have been found for the more senior candidates on the list. Senior administrators are reticent to change the promotion system because they tend not to see it as a serious problem. After all, they came up through that system themselves so it has to be effective.

It is important to note that regulations and procedures governing the personnel process are understood throughout the system and are rarely violated by such acts as promoting friends and relatives or succumbing to political pressures for appointments as is often the case in other developing countries.

Primary school teachers are graduates of five-year teacher training institutes which begin following the ninth grade. At least two such institutes exist in most governorates. Preparatory, general secondary and technical secondary schoolteachers are university graduates. Neither the employing schools nor the teachers have any authoritative voice in assignments, although if vacancies exist, requests by teachers to be assigned near their homes will be granted. This practice is frequently very important because the low salary structure makes it very difficult to live outside the family home. The governorate chief educational officers appoint primary school teachers and the MOE appoints all the rest.

Administrative Evaluation. In order to support a merit-driven system of promotion, there is an elaborate, ideal-type evaluation system designed to measure merit. According to established legal procedures (Law 47 of 1978), all management personnel (and teachers) receive a strictly merit-based performance evaluation by at least two superiors once a year. Special forms rating proficiency and performance criteria focus on such issues as knowledge of work, relationship with superiors and subordinates, decision-making ability, and attendance at training programs. A 100 point scale exists with categories ranging from excellent (90 - 100 points) to fail (0 -to- 50 points).

Ministry officials, in the interviews, reported that virtually everyone receives the top ranking of "excellent." Thus, the instrument does not differentiate between strong and weak administrators for purposes of facilitating the promotion of the most able people.

Incentives. The monthly salary scale (1986) for a teacher ranges from a beginning level of approximately US $30.00 to a maximum of US $85.00. A headmaster, depending on years of service earns monthly between US $39.00 and US $62.00. The maximum salary for Undersecretaries is US $166.00, First Undersecretaries US $173.00 and the Minister US $195.00. Monthly increments per year of service range from US $2.00 to US $5.00. The salaries are low and therefore do not serve as much of an incentive to attract and retain highly qualified people.

Public Employment and Education. The idealism of Nasser's Arab socialism of the 1950s and 1960s, coupled with upward mobility expectations of the rural poor and lower economic urban classes found an outlet in an expanding government.[28] Under the British, government employment provided administrative support for the colonial system and was an upper middle class avenue to security and social status. Under Nasser, government employment, based on appropriate levels of education, was opened up to all socio-economic classes with the intention of providing a political base to support the revolution.

Abdel-Kalek and Tignor[29] report that under Nasser the number of government ministries expanded from 15 in 1952 to 28 in 1970. Civil service expanded from 350,000 to 1,200,000 during that period. Current hard employment data are difficult to obtain, but estimates are that about one-fourth of total Egyptian employment is in the private sector, one-third in state-owned public enterprises, and the balance (about 40 percent) in government, of which the Ministry of Education represents one-half. Based on these estimates, the MOE is the largest single institutional

employer in Egypt. Approximately one out of every five employees in the total labor force is engaged in education.[30]

Government policies locked the economy, government institutions and the educational systems in a vicious circle. All levels of education, including university-level education, was declared free and public employment for university graduates was guaranteed. However, no policies were established which would channel the expanding educated pool of manpower into the most productive economic sectors. The ongoing needs of the economy stimulated demands for more education which all too often resulted in large numbers of students studying non-economically essential subjects.

From 1975 to 1983 the percentage of university students (excluding Al Azhar University) studying scientific and technical fields actually declined from 39 to 29 percent.[31] Large numbers of those trained in non-economically essential subjects ended up on the public payroll performing work for which they were not trained.[32] The consequence of government employment policies in Egypt has led to a "rampant over staffing in government ministries",[33] underemployment of job skills, and immense complications in attempting to manage bloated bureaucracies.[34] Zahra reports on an Egyptian study by the Central Agency for Organization and Management which found that about two-thirds of government employees had little or nothing to do.[35]

The educational institution mirrors the administrative overstaffing found in the general public sector. The low teacher salary scale "does not enable him or her to survive. So they tutor, drive taxies before and after school or leave for more

lucrative positions inside the country."[36] They also press hard to get into administration and thus earn more money.

The pressure for promotion and the societal tolerance for bureaucratic overstaffing has resulted in an educational system top heavy with administrators. An Academy for Educational Development study reports that for each primary school (grades 1 to 6) there are 2.2 headmasters and 1.9 vice principals. "The excess in the rate of headmasters and vice principals is due to the pattern of promotion by sheer seniority by which a senior teacher becomes a vice principal or headmaster regardless of the actual need of work."[37]

The author visited schools where there were as many as four or five headmasters and several vice principals. Another AED report calculates that as much as 25 percent of personnel salaries go to administration, a figure that is unusually high.[38]

The situation is complicated by the fact that administrators teach a reduced load or don't teach at all. There is no unit at the national or regional level that oversees the balanced placement of administrators. Also, there is a significant teacher shortage in rural areas and in numerous specialized academic subjects as in languages, technical skills and science.

In-Service Training. An important part of the personnel process is upgrading the skills and quality of performance of teachers and administrators. The Civil Service Law (Law 47 of 1978) specifies that anyone who is to be promoted must complete the proper training.

The content of the courses is determined by the specific job descriptions requiring training. For example, course content for

a headmaster position includes: examination regulations, rules for school management, MOE policy, procedures for dealing with teacher supervision, student discipline and basic education.

While the in-service training plays an important role, there are significant limitations. For example, almost no attention is given to job retraining of the large numbers of surplus administrators in an attempt to redirect their time and energies to more productive areas of teaching, school guidance, or counseling roles. Also, there is no comprehensive plan for training at the Ministry or regional levels. Finally, candidates are evaluated during training but these evaluations play almost no role in the promotion process.[39]

Considering the limited training time devoted to preparing administrators, great reliance necessarily has to be given to on-the-job training. A general belief exists that one learns to be an administrator by doing the job and watching one's boss at work.[40] Thus, the system tends to reproduce itself.

The personnel system adds to or detracts from the vigor of the administrative infrastructure, the subject of the next section of this paper.

Administrative Infrastructure

The essential elements of an administrative infrastructure revolve around its decision-making process.[41] Decision making in an educational institution should be, among other things, tied directly to central policy, flexible, timely, communicated and coordinated vertically and horizontally, responsive to local conditions, and supported by an effective and efficient information system.

In 1977, along with other ministries of government, the MOE initiated a program of decentralized decision making. While the MOE reserved the right to make policy, planning, follow-up and evaluation decisions, regional governorates and districts were charged with establishing, equipping, supervising, and operating all schools.

The decentralization of authority, however, does not reach all the way down to the local school headmaster, who is basically a coordinator of teachers. The headmaster, for example, is not permitted to participate in the selection of his teachers, vice-principal, or support staff (e.g., secretaries, social workers). Serious confusion even exists as to whether the headmaster or the supervisors, who work for higher authorities, are responsible for development of the academic program. Local school or district officials have little input into the decision making process.[42] Hence, innovative ideas which come from the teachers have little chance to be heard. Local initiative and responsibility are thus discouraged.[43] Lack of participation in decision making at the local level where schooling takes place further isolates the eduational institution from the society it serves.

The decision-making process in Egypt is often simplified through standardization with the objective of producing a nation-wide system of comparative quality. However, prescribed procedures, texts, and instructional materials tend to lead toward uniformity and inflexibility in a country of great regional contrasts and divergent educational needs. Under these conditions, where the teacher doesn't participate extensively in

lesson design, the urban school has become the model even for rural areas.

The researchers found that vertical and horizontal communication between senior MOE and senior governorate officials is relatively complete and effective. At no time in the interviews did anyone at the regional level express feelings of being isolated from the central centers of power in Cairo. While formal communication channels are tediously slow, most information is passed around by a series of regular monthly meetings when decision makers get together and discuss events that need tending. The missing link in the coordination and communication chain is at the local level where headmasters reported that there is almost no contact between personnel of basic education, preparatory, and secondary schools. Thus, vertical communication patterns tend to operate effectively. Horizontal patterns between branches, however, tend not to exist.

The budgeting process is also decentralized to the point where bottom up budget planning is the norm. That is, the 26 governorates propose their financial requirements based on formula driven teacher/student/school ratios. This approach to budget planning is useful in that it provides a degree of regional participation in the resource mobilization process. The rigid formulas, however, limit their degrees of flexibility. The MOE collects the budget requests, discusses and prioritizes them before passing the entire package to the Ministry of Finance where final decisions are made.

The information system supporting the administrative infrastructure has developed an adequate internal database for

operational decision making and control, such as student enrollment, budgets, classroom use, and new teacher requirements. These data appear to be effectively but laboriously handled, mostly by hand entry rather than computer or accounting machines.

The shortcomings of the MOE information system are mainly omissions. That is, the MOE neither collects nor uses much external data about the national or regional economies, such as income distribution, economic growth by sector, current manpower needs, future occupational shortages, and national development goals. Data on social needs are typically not gathered and fed into the decision-making process, such as: family goals and educational expectations for children, cultural values, occupational objectives, and level of parental education.

The lack of information at the local level is especially noticeable where headmasters have little or no information regarding demographic patterns in the city, growth patterns or socio-economic data on the particular attendance areas, or any other information reflecting on the environment of their schools.

Policy and Planning

The infrastructure of an organization receives its energy, intelligence, skills and risk taking characteristics through its personnel employment and promotion systems. That same organization receives its direction and capability of reform through its policy and planning systems. How effective is the policy-making process?

The maximum policy making body governing pre-university education is the Higher Council for Education. The Council is headed by the Minister of Education and comprised of

distinguished representatives of universities, Al-Azhar, production and service industries, cultural organizations, finance and planning organizations, and educational systems (Law 139 of 1981). Given the fact that this complex Council almost never meets, the defacto obligation of giving direction to the educational institution has fallen to the Council of Educational Undersecretaries who are the senior managers in the MOE.[44]

Thus, as the field research team concluded, "The policy formation process is evolutionary and slow, not so much due to the process itself, but because the top levels of the MOE are staffed with managers with long experience in the MOE who accept the system as it is without much query or initiative to change the status quo."[45]

A potential link to the changing needs of Egyptian society is the National Center for Educational Research. However, at the Center little research is directed toward guiding the future of education through an analysis of economic and social trends as understood in the context of occupational needs and national goals.

Educational Policy must be carried out by educational planning, which is defined by Coombs as "the application of rational systematic analysis to the process of educational development with the aim of making education more effective and efficient in responding to the needs and goals of its students and society."[46]

There are basically three types of educational planning used in developing nations. <u>Strategic planning</u> is a long term strategy to both shape and react to future national social and

economic needs by modifying the programatic and resource requirements of the educational system to respond to those needs. Social demand planning focuses on student population growth and the resources (schools, instructional materials, teachers, etc.) to provide schooling for that growth. Manpower planning (a limited version of strategic planning) focuses on future target year skill requirements in crucial employment categories, and then modifying the educational system to ensure those numbers of trained personnel are available.[47]

In Egypt there is no comprehensive educational planning tying national needs to educational programs and output. Instead, MOE planning is quantitative in nature focusing on expanding the educational system in response to the government's commitment to provide educational services throughout Egypt (Law 139 of 1981). As Cochran writes, "The emphasis of education in the last 100 years has been to increase enrollment and to thereby increase the literacy and ease with which societal needs and values can be transmitted."[48]

Planning, especially at the basic education level, is bottom up as regional governorate officials submit new project proposals (schools, classrooms, equipment, teachers) and budget requests every year to cover the expanding needs of social demand for educational services. The MOE reviews these proposals, generally reduces them after holding regional discussions, and sends them to the Ministries of Finance and Planning for final evaluations and decisions.[49]

The significant point is that the policy and planning energies of MOE personnel tend to be devoted to maintaining and

expanding the existing system while giving very limited attention to redirecting the priorities and programs of that system. As the next section will point out, only part of the problem can be attributed to a personnel system which reinforces the status quo and a planning system limited to attempts as providing for expanding enrollment. Part of the problem associated with constraints to change can be attributed to the level of educational funding assigned by the Egyptian government.

Government Funding of Education

A pertinent question is, what financial priority has Egypt attached to supporting public education? Also, does the level of funding serve to facilitate or constrain the organization and management reforms necessary to spur necessary educational changes?

The central government provides almost all the financial support for public education through taxes, customs, and other general and local revenues. Other sources of revenue are examination fees, local levies, and donations. Significant external funding has been provided by USAID, extensively supporting basic education, and UNESCO, supporting literacy and adult education.[50]

Even though Egypt is confronted by numerous serious economic problems, its average annual growth rate in gross domestic product was between 1980 and 1985 was a healthy 5.2 percent. The World Bank reports that as 33rd highest among 38 comparative middle and lower middle-income nations.[51]

As a percentage of total central government expenditures, education in Egypt receives 10.6 percent of the budget. Of 23

comparable middle and lower middle-income nations reporting, only Turkey spends less on education (10 percent). Significantly, the seven countries reporting lower per capita incomes than Egypt, all spend a higher percentage (average of 16 percent) of their central government expenditures on education than did Egypt.[52] In addition, Egypt has been spending less rather than more of its resources on education. UNESCO reported that from 1975 to 1983 the percentage of GNP spent on education reduced from 5 percent to 4.1.[53]

The distribution of resources within the educational system is also important to note. Citing information supplied by the Ministry of Education, an Academy for Educational Development report states that "In 1981-82, primary education [grades 1-6] accounted for 0.8 percent of GDP and preparatory education [grades 7-9] absorbed 0.4 percent for a total of 1.2 percent. Total enrollment in basic education [grades 1-9] in 1981-82 was 6.4 million persons, representing approximately 15 percent of Egypt's population. To spend only 1.2 percent of the GDP on the education of 15 percent of the population may represent unwise economy."[54]

The above observation is especially critical in the light of the World Bank's conclusions that the fastest developing countries have adopted a balanced investment strategy that includes education, increased physical capital and technology transfer. "Returns to investment have generally been higher in education then in physical assets. Economic rates of return to primary education in developing countries have averaged 26 percent, compared with estimated returns on physical capital of

13 percent. This suggests that lack of education is a greater obstacle to industrialization than lack of physical assets. Economic returns are higher at the lower and more general levels of education."[55]

Another significant trend concerns the high and still increasing percent of total budget expenditures going into salaries. In 1978-79 in primary education, for example, 80.3 percent of the total MOE expenditures went into salaries. By 1982-83 that proportion was 87.2 percent. Secondary school education does not differ a great deal. During that same period funds for school construction and repair almost ground to a halt as it fell from 5.6 percent to 0.2 percent; and funds to purchase instructional supplies and equipment declined from 14.3 percent to 12.6 percent.[56] In other words, Egypt is becoming more and more confined to simply paying its teachers.

In short, education in Egypt at the pre-university levels is arguably underfinanced. The comparatively low percentage of the nation's GDP and the central government's budget devoted to education coupled with the high percentage of those funds going to paying salaries leaves few degrees of financial freedom for funding a significant reform of the organization and management structures and the educational systems they support.

Change Through Other Government Ministries

The author conducted a series of interviews with senior personnel in the Ministries of Finance and National Planning as well as the Central Agency for Organization and Management. The purpose was to find what can be done when the leaders of a ministry, such as the MOE, are reticent to exert the energies and

take the risks required to establish new goals and the means to achieve those goals. In some developing nations where the researcher has examined this issue, the Ministry of Finance could orient the budget and the Ministry of Planning could establish the goals which together could (and did) place great pressure on redirecting the system of education.

In Egypt, such is not the case. Officials in both Ministries reported that their task is to react to programs of change proposed by the Ministry of Education. The thought that they might use their control over finances or planning to lever the MOE into new directions was inconsistent with established patterns of inter-ministery operation.

Summary of Findings

Mohammed A. El Ghannam writes that, "For a number of years, the Arab countries, both individually and collectively, have been seeking a new strategy for the development of their educational systems so as to become more capable of meeting present challenges and responding to social change." Any new strategy would "...undoubtedly encounter one of the most serious educational problems in the Arab countries--namely the problem of educational administration...."[57]

This study responds to the question, what are the organizational constraints acting within and upon the Ministry of Education that deter its capacity for administrative development?

In effect there are two systems of organization and management in evidence in Egypt. One is the formal, idealized system reflected in law and policy which details how the administrative system <u>should</u> function. The other is an informal

operating system governed by traditions, precedents and expectations which detail how the administrative system does function.

The energy, enthusiasm, creativity, skills and experience that provide the substance of a strong administrative system are the product of an effective personnel system. A system should employ, evaluate and promote the best and the brightest up to the highest leadership levels. On paper such a personnel system exists, but in practice it maintains a routinized selection, evaluation and promotion system based on the premise that one manager is as good as another. The educational managers devote considerable attention to protecting their roles in the seniority system knowing that their promotions depend more on time in grade than the quality of their performance. The administrators at all levels operate out of similar training and work experience having started in the classroom and worked their way up. Such forces have the effect of projecting a type of "sameness" throughout the system.

A consequence of long experience and great familiarization with the administrative system is that the leadership is very capable in dealing with current, recurring problems. They can maintain the existing system and run it with an acceptable degree of efficiency. While there are notable exceptions, there is a tendency among leaders to look to the past for answers instead of the future.

A resignation to the status quo is perhaps the deepest and most intractable problem of the MOE. It is a state of mind that permeates practically the entire administrative system. For

example, when methods other than the traditional are proposed, such the enforcement of the government's own merit-based promotion rules, the response almost inevitably was, "It can't be done."

El Ghannam reported a similar finding. "Administrative reform in education was centered on the present rather than being future oriented. In other words, it concentrated on the existing problems related to the operation of the educational system rather than on the future vision or blueprint of education which includes new concepts such as life-long and life-wide education, open learning systems, etc."[58]

While the personnel system supplies the expertise to manage a complex organization, the organizational infrastructure provides means. The writer found the infrastructure as a mechanism for coordinating, communicating and executing routine decisions to be generally timely and efficient. Because standardized procedures and formula driven decisions are common practice, the long experience of the administrator corps has tended to iron out the difficulties over time. However, an administrative infrastructure that has such long experience operating with standardized procedures understandably has difficulty responding to challenges in new and creative manners.

The great challenges for change should come principally through a strategic planning process examining the present and future needs of the nation and establishing new, realistic, directions. There is, in the ideal, such a strategic planning and policy formation body in Egypt. Its members represent a wide range of national interests. However, because this policy body

rarely meets, the real course of the educational system is set by the senior administrators of that system. Educational policy, therefore, typically involves making the system work and grow rather than making it work better and grow in greater accord with national socio-economic needs.

In sum, when Mohammed A. El Ghannam portrays the difficulties of modernizing the processes of educational administration in developing countries, the case of Egypt provides insightful examples.[59] A ministry of education sheltered from external pressures for change, with its ranks filled by a seniority system, senior leaders close to retirement, operating through routinized procedures, underfinanced and barely able to pay administrators and teachers a living wage has little incentive or means to bring about significant reform.

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